

THE INFINITUDE OF GRACE.

C. H. BALSBAUGH.

To Elder William Hertzler, beloved fellow soldier and sufferer in the Salvation Army of the King of Kings.

With a heart burning for active work in the Kingdom of God, your feet are fast in the stocks, your mouth closed and your tongue wedged by a fearful tumor which nothing can remove but omnipotent grace. Your ear and heart need ever to be open to the assurance of John 13:7. A marvellous rectifier of idea and life is suffering. Ignorance and self-complacency and misconceptions of God and man, are seen to be dross in the Refiner's crucible.

Wonderful is the cohesion of sin and humanity. Nothing but Almighty power and infinite love can effect a dissolution. God gave us one perfect man to show us His ideal of human nature. To be as this man, is Christianity, is salvation. God must reenact the mystery of the incarnation in the redemption of each individual. God is not more truly in Christ than Christ is in the Christian. The captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. Heb. 2:10. What a beautiful correlative is I Peter 4:12-14. Sin is the great reality of which suffering is the oppressive shadow. We must accept the penalty of violated law. Jesus took it voluntarily, exhausted its utmost intensity, triumphed in it and over it gloriously, and is now the "Great High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities because He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15. We cannot experience II Cor. 3:18, until we have first realized II Cor. 4:6. O that overpowering, crushing revelation of God in which we see ourselves in the light of His glory, in the beauty of His holiness!

"Truly, who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Mal. 3:2, 3. All this is gracefully and consciously fulfilled by Jesus Christ in us through the Holy Ghost. No heaven short of this purgation. Without this elimination of evil we carry hell in us, no matter what objective heaven we may be in. "The Kingdom of God is within you," is the fundamental fact of redemption. Nothing external that we can do, or that God can do for us, is salvation. Transformation into the likeness of God, the enjoyment of His peace, the rapture of

His joy, the immutability of His security—this is eternal life, this is salvation.

It is simply shocking what a conception of religion many professing Christians have. To be in the church or to be in heaven, and attend to objective forms of obedience and worship, is their measure of salvation. They need the advent of the Holy One, the Refiner's Fire, and the Fuller's Soap. The very essence of the soul is saturated with evil, and we need such smelting and refining and polishing as Jehovah—Jesus alone can give. Very, very "meek and lowly in heart" will those become who "learn of Jesus." God is love. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." I John 4:16; I Cor. 13:4, 5. The swell of self-consequence is utterly alien to the Christed soul. Hungering for human applause is of the very essence of sin. All must be done so exclusively to God as if no human relationship ever existed, and yet so entirely for human weal as if we were very God acting in and through Christ. This is the Divine ideal of Christian life and service.

"Search the Scriptures." "The word is God." "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7. How poor, blind, incredulous human nature twists and wrangles to elude the blessed significance of these words. The Bible is a large volume reaching over the whole course of history, and over the whole domain of nature, and embraces all the mysteries of Providence, and reaches into the endless ages of eternity. Our mortal life is far too short to comprehend its sublime teachings, or to unfold the marvelous movements of the infinite in the creation and redemption of man. We do not half value ourselves according to the Divine standard. There is a meaning in our life which in general we are too dull and earthly to apprehend. If God would not see something wonderful in our spiritual constitution, he would not have redeemed us at such stupendous cost. These transcendent facts it is our mission and pleasure to lay before the church and the world in our ministry with pen and tongue. There is a church and a church. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Rom. 9:6. Many claim the symbolic badge, yet "know not whether there be any Holy Ghost." Acts 19:2. The only certainty of salvation is when we are temples of the living God; when we have the unimpeachable witness of Rom. 8:16. Unless God dwells in us and walks in us, and works in us mightily, we are not Christians. II Cor. 6:16 and Col. 1:29. The greatest work of God is not to redeem man from the penalty of sin,

but from its dominion. And the greatest work of man is to accept and enshrine this Savior, and "to walk even as He also walked." I John 2:6. This goes far, far deeper than attending to ordinances, and complying with church regulations. It is to exhibit in daily life the beautiful significance of the divine symbols. To "be holy as God is holy," and to "walk in the light as he is in the light"—this and only this, is "the life hid with Christ in God." Whoever lacks this, fails in joint-heirship with Christ.

But we need not despair. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I John 2:1. What is impossible with man, is possible with God. Salvation is His work. "God manifest in the flesh" is still the reality and glory of Christianity. Through Christ communicated by the Holy Ghost through faith, we attain to Rom. 15:13, and II Thess. 1:11, 12, and I Peter 1:8. God is pledged to "conform us to the image of his dear Son," that "we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Rom. 8:29, Eph. 1:4. What a glorious thing it is to be a Christian. Miniature Gods! We do not yet know the millionth part of the wonders and beatitudes that await the saints. I Cor. 2:9; I John 3:2. But it is only for saints. What a goal have we in Eph. 2:7. But first the wonderful realization of Eph. 1:17-20; 3:16-19.

You are on the border of mortality. But death has no sting for faith. Where real faith is, there is Christ the Conqueror of sin and devil and death. "Perfect love casteth out fear." I John 4:18. There is "no condemnation" and "no separation." Rom. 8:1, 38, 39. The "Yea of God" is our eternal security. II Cor. 1:20. We cannot be lost. John 10:27, 28, 29.

At the funeral services of Dr. A. J. Gordon, a Chinaman sent a sum of money with the following note: "Goon Moy gives the inclosed for missions instead of flowers, as he thinks Dr. Gordon would have desired." The Chinaman's note rebukes our ostentatious display at funerals. At the funeral of some Christians more money is spent for flowers to decorate the coffins and graves than the deceased ever gave for the conversion of the world.—*Evangelical Messenger*.

I HAVE often felt vexed with the man who chopped the New Testament up into verses. But I forgive him a great deal of blundering for his wisdom in letting these twy words make a verse by themselves; "Jesus wept."—C. H. Spurgeon.